

My Week Philip May*

Monday
There are boy jobs and girl jobs and in our house I do the former, because we are not Liberal Democrats. And today, my boy job is to put up some shelves.
“But how many shelves?” I ask.
“The right amount of shelves,” says the Prime Minister.
“Interesting,” I say.
“Also,” she adds, “the shelves should be strong. And stable.”
Then she says there should definitely be a good amount of shelves, not a bad amount of shelves, and I say that’s super but I’m still not 100 per cent clear on

how many shelves that actually is.
“I think what’s important,” says the PM, “is that shelves means shelves, and you need to make a success of them.”
We’ve been married for 36 years, you know. Never a dull moment.

Tuesday
Going on *The One Show* means going on *The One Show* and the PM is determined to make a success of it. Fiona and Nick, her chiefs of staff, say she’ll definitely be asked about her hobbies and should have at least two.



“Walking,” I suggest. “And shoes.”
Nick says this sounds like just the one hobby, though.
“No, no,” says the PM. “I don’t wear my shoes for walking.”
Nick says this sounds dangerously bohemian and wonders if we have any other hobbies.
“Philip takes out the bins,” says the PM.
“And ... then?” says Fiona, who sounds confused.
“I bring in the bins,” I tell her.
“I don’t get it,” says Fiona.
“It’s boy stuff,” explains the PM.
“Right Nick?” I ask.
“Sorry, what?” says Nick. “Think I was sleeping.”

Thursday
Dilemma. The bins are full but I don’t want to take them out in case all the cabinet ministers still think I’m a janitor.
“We should have talked more about how I’m your confidant,” I say, bitterly, to the PM. “Except we couldn’t, because you didn’t tell me about the election. And for decades, you didn’t even tell me you wanted to be PM.”
The PM says there wasn’t time. Because there’s always so much other important stuff for us to talk about.
“Such as what?” I ask, grumpily.
The PM doesn’t say anything for ages. Then she says she’s still waiting for me to do those shelves.
“Yes, but how many do you want?” I say.

Wednesday
I’m leaving Downing Street when I bump into Boris Johnson, David Davis and Liam Fox coming in. In the past I’ve felt a bit intimidated by them in case they thought I was boring. Although now I’m a TV star like them!
“Hello!” I say.
Boris wonders if I’m the chancellor of the exchequer.
“No!” I say. “It’s me! Didn’t you see? The man who empties the bins!”
Davis says I should empty the one by the Downing Street front gate, in that case, because it’s stinking out the street.
“No,” I say, mildly. “It’s me. Philip. I do the boy jobs. Remember?”
Davis says it smells more like a fox job.
“Not my job,” says Liam Fox.
“What even is your job?” asks Boris Johnson.
Then he hands me an empty Starbucks coffee cup and they all go inside, still bickering. Probably shouldn’t have bothered. Not really our sort of people.

Friday
“Okay look,” says Fiona. “You two need proper hobbies. Otherwise people are going to think you’re hiding something.”
The PM and I look at each other, bemused.
“Shoes?” says the PM, vaguely.
“Cookbooks?”
Then I say I collect ties, and Fiona asks whether they’re particularly interesting ties, and I say no, just ties. Then Fiona sighs.
“Stop sighing,” says the PM, crossly.
“Maybe this is just who we are. No secrets. No hobbies. No drama. Just nice, normal, strong, stable people. And if that’s boring, then so bloody well be it.”
And then she smiles, and I smile, and she takes my hand. And then we go downstairs into Downing Street’s secret basement, paint a pentagram on the floor and sacrifice a black cockerel to our Dark Master Ba’al, he who is Lord of the Flies and Ruler of the Pit. And then we brush our teeth and go to bed.
*according to Hugo Rifkind

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